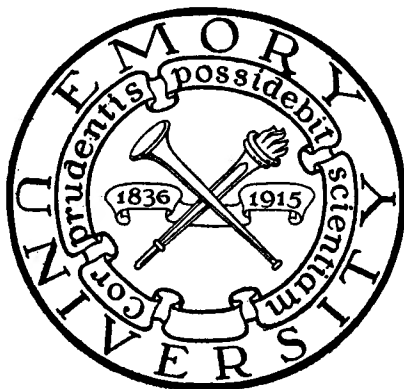


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HESPER,
AND
OTHER POEMS,

BY
THEO. H. HILL.

" Meantime, not emulous of highest Praise,
At sweet Parnassus' flow'ry Foot I lie,
And drink enraptur'd the descending Lays,
Or in short Flights my tender Pinions try:
So in the humble Vale the Linnet flies,
While the strong Eagle sails along the Skies."
THOMAS GIBBONS.

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PREFACE.

THE author styles his verses "Poems," in compliance with a courteous custom, which thus entitles ALL compositions in rhyme. Written in moments of leisure, merely for his own amusement, they are published now at the suggestion of friends, whose partiality has attributed to them an intrinsic merit they may not really possess.

T. H. H.

Raleigh, December, 1861.

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HESPER.

HESPER.

"What time the stars first flocked into the blue
Behind young Hesper, Shepherd of the eve."

THOS. BUCHANAN READ.

The brilliant EVENING STAR to-night,
Gleams through the dusky air;
As though some seraph in his flight,
Through the unclouded realms of light,
Had paused an instant there;—
Had paused and silently surveyed
The dreaming world below;
Then flown away to Eden's shade
Where "living waters" flow:
Methinks some bright unearthly gem

Fell from his flashing diadem,
For, when he winged his flight afar
Through the enchanted air,
A light remained,—THE EVENING STAR
Shone forth serenely there!

'Tis thus the great—the good depart,
And leave a beacon-light,
To cheer the pilgrim's drooping heart
And guide his feet aright:

Hence we revere the sage—the seer
Of every age and clime;
Whose priceless gems still sparkle here
Upon the strand of time.

ANACREONTIC.

"I awoke the next morning with an aching head and feverish frame. Ah, those midnight carousals, how glorious they would be if there were no next morning?" *

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

Fill up! fill up!
The poison-cup
With Lethe to the brim;
I yearn—I pine—I faint—I thirst
To see the brilliant bubbles burst
Around its rosy rim:
Then, let me drain
The bowl again,
And fill it up once more;
For fearful phantoms haunt my brain,
And at the open door

*Pelham, ch. xxiii.

A ghastly group of fiends appear—
Their hollow laughter racks my ear,
See! how malignantly they leer

Upon the wreck they've made :
They little care that honor, wealth,
And home, and happiness, and health
Are blighted and betrayed !

Fill up ! fill up !
The sparkling cup :—
It is with Lethe fraught !
It drowns reflection, palsies thought,
Binds memory in chains,
And bids the hot blood leap and dart,
Like molten lava from my heart
To fire the sluggish veins !

Fill to the brim and I will drink,
“ To Memory and Thought,
ETERNAL DEATH,”—for oh ! *to think*,
Is with such horror fraught—
That hell would be

A heaven to me
Were memory no more :
Aye ! could I never think again—
Never the past deplore,
I should no longer here remain,
For hell can have no penal pain
In all its fiery domain,
So fearful unto me ;
As the scorpion sting
Of that terrible thing,
Which we call memory !

* * * * *

To dream of all that I am now—
Of all I might have been—
The crown of thorns upon my brow—
The gnawing worm within ;—
Of all the treasures I have lost,
Like leaves autumnal, tempest-tost,—
Of sunbeams into clouds withdrawn,
Their momentary sparkle gone,—

Of murdered hope, and blighted bloom—
O God ! how horrible my doom !

Yet fill—fill up !
The crimson cup
With frenzy to the brim !
I wildly burn—I madly thirst
To see the blushing bubbles burst
Around its ruby rim !

LOVE AMONG THE ROSES.

In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet scarce espied:—

KEATS' "ODE TO PSYCHE."

I have found him ! Here he lies,
Weary of the chase;—
Lured by vagrant butterflies
To this shady place:
Hat in hand, he ran for hours,
In and out among the flowers,
Following each golden prize
With wingéd feet and wistful eyes.

He dreams beneath a drooping vine,
Whose graceful trailers intertwine,

Weaving above his head a woof
Of dark green leaves and crimson flowers :
In vain through this umbrageous roof
May noontide sunbeams try to peep—
Here, time is told in twilight hours,
While “infant beauty” lies—asleep.

Gay birds and gorgeous butterflies
Flash through these “purpling glooms,”*
Where zephyrs woo with plaintive sighs,
The hearts of hidden blooms ;
Yet, heedless of their happy flight,
He slumbers still, serenely bright—
Transfigured in the shifting light !

The tinkling bells of sylvan streams,
Which wind around this cool retreat,
Chime to the music of his dreams ;

* And softly through the forest bars
Light lovely shapes, on glossy plumes,
Float ever in, like winged stars,
Amid the purpling glooms.

AMELIA B. WELBY.

For, sheltered from the glowing heat,
Their laughing—sparkling waters meet
To ripple at his rosy feet!

Yes! I've found him!
All around him
Blushing flowers bud and bloom;
Merrily the birds are singing—
Drowsily the bees are clinging
(Drunken with perfume)
To the lilies and the roses
'Round the spot where LOVE reposes!

HOPE OF HEAVEN.

"O where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul?"

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

O there is naught upon this earth of our's
The restless longings of the soul to fill ;
We pant for fairer fields and fresher flowers—
For purer fountains still.

Our drooping souls, like captive eagles, pine
To breathe, once more, their native atmos-
phere—
To soar above the cloud, where sunbeams shine
And shadows disappear.

For what are all the rosy, dazzling dreams—
The glowing hopes and fleeting joys of earth;—
Its fading smiles---its evanescent gleams
Of happiness and mirth?

Faint, glimmering moonbeams falling on a pall,
Or lighting up the pathway to the tomb—
Wild flowers that blossom on a ruined wall—
Oäses in the gloom!

These are the joys of earth; but tell me where
Are its wild sorrows—its harassing fears?
Where are the clouds—the shades of dark
despair—
That haunt “this vale of tears?”

Oh *where* shall rest be found? A stormy tide
Is rushing madly onward to the sea;
Immortal spirits down the current glide
Into Eternity.

Thrice happy he! to whom the change of time

And tide may leave one solitary rock—

AN ARARAT, eternal and sublime,

Unshaken by the shock;—

A HOPE OF HEAVEN, whose summit in the skies,

(The only refuge of a ruined race)

Smiles through the storm—the swelling surge
defies,

And stands—*a resting place!*

TO L. F. P.

Oh ! when the dark, tumultuous tide
Of life is ebbing fast ;—
When every earthly hope has died,
Thy memory shall still abide,
An Eden in the waste :—
“ A diamond in the desert ” where
A silver fountain sings,
And birds of summer fill the air
With merry carolings ;—
A land of beauty and of bloom
Whence zephyrs, freighted with perfume,
On wings of woven light convey
The sweets of Paradise away !

When all is drear and desolate ;—
When o’er the waters dark,

(Like thistle-down before the blast,
Or dead leaves on a torrent cast,)
 My soul, a helmless ark,
 Is rudely—madly driven on
 Before the dread Euroclydon
 Of unrelenting fate ;
Then brighter than the sparkling bow
 Whose sky-born splendors sat
Like gems upon the regal brow
 Of rugged Ararat,
Over the dusky wave afar,
Love's scintillant unchanging star,
From the bright portal of the past
A flood of golden light shall cast,
To gild the gloomy twilight air
And shew engraven everywhere
THY NAME,—the first—the last !

.

CLOUDS WITH SILVER LININGS.

AN IMPROMPTU ADDRESS TO JOB'S COMFORTERS.

“Clouds have silver linings;”—
Thus the poet sings,
To stifle vain repinings
And silence murmurings;
But in the cloud above me
No ‘*silver*’ do I see;
Now Poet, ‘an’ you love me,”
Prithee! shew it unto me!

The words which you have spoken
Perchance are very true,
Yet, until the cloud be broken
And the sunlight peepeth through,
This thought of “silver linings”

But awakens fresh repinings,
For you must surely see, Sir—
Though truthful you may be, Sir—
That the dark side is for me, Sir,
While the bright side is for you !

Even were its 'lining' *golden*—
If it may not be beholden—
Pray, tell me ! Mr. Poet,
Is it comforting to know it—
Unless you mean to shew it?
Your well-meant information
Gives me no consolation ;
For the sky is none the brighter,
Nor the cloud a shade the lighter
Unto me,
From knowing that behind it—
If I can ever find it—
There may be
A sun that shines forever
But which I alas ! may never
Chance to see !

So dark the cloud that hovers

In my sky to-night,

I cannot think it covers

A single gleam of light:

Now, prove your aphorism,—

If such, indeed, it be—

Dispel my scepticism!

Or prate no more to me;—

To drive away each shade of doubt,

Pray, turn the dark cloud inside out!

“DUM VIVIMUS, VIVAMUS.”

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”—ST. MATT. VI: 34.

Earth is not an El Dorado,
Nor is life a summer-day;
Every sunbeam hath a shadow
Chasing it away—
Frail Ephemera that perish,—
Doomed to disappear;
Those we love, caress and cherish,
May not linger *here*:
Pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow,
Here, alternate, come and go,—
Which of these we'll have to-morrow
We may never know.

Gather flowers—blushing flowers—
Which, *at present*, blow;
Leave the buds—they are not our's—
They for *others* grow.

If it now be pleasant weather,
Let us merry be,—
Let us laugh and sing together.
Why repress our glee
By vain speculations, whether,
In the future, we
Shall be gloomier, or gladder,
Gayer or less gay?
Such *reflections overshadow*
Beautiful "TO-DAY!"
Fretting—murmuring—repining.
Darkens every sorrow ;—
For regret is ever twining
Cypress for the morrow.

* * * * *

But remember!—Oh ! remember
In thy darkest day,
That the drearier December,
Brighter is the May :
Earth is not an El Dorado,
Nor is life a summer-day ;
Every sunbeam hath a shadow
Chasing it away.

DESPAIR.

"No more,—no more,—no more !
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore,)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar !"

EDGAR ALLEN POE.

I have naught to hope or dread;
All save sentience is dead;
Peace, with Innocence, has fled.

To the gloom in which I dwell,
This world's darkest dungeon-cell,
Were as heaven, unto hell.

Ye, who yet may hope or fear,
Shun this sad sepulchral sphere!—
Rather die than enter here!

Each unto himself, is fate—
Carver of his own estate—
Be it blest or desolate ;

*Hence how soothing is the thought—
With what sweet nepenthe fraught—
I have all this ruin wrought ;—*

*I with sorrow chose to sup—
Madly drained her bitter cup—
Having had—the filling up !*

Fairest flowers soonest die ;
Summer-friends are first to fly ;
Memory alone is nigh !

Of the many, only she
Yet remaineth true to me :
Like the echo of the sea,

In the shell upon the shore,
She abideth evermore,
Murmuring of heretofore,

In my heart a stranded shell,
Dashed by passion's stormy swell,
On the burning beach of hell !

I have naught to hope or dread ;
All save sentience is dead ;
Peace, with Innocence, has fled !

SONG OF THE BUTTERFLY.

"What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty."

FATE OF THE BUTTERFLY.—SPENSER.

Who is merrier than I?
Quoth the golden butterfly,
In the shining court of May,
Whose apparel half so gay?
I reflect each sparkling hue
Of her gaudy retinue.
I have kissed the Lily's cheek,
I have played at "hide and seek,"
Blushing Violet, with you!
Who is merrier than I?
Quoth the golden Butterfly.

II

I have flirted, too, with thee,
Beautiful Anemone !
And the blue-eyed Pimpernel,
Is superlatively blest,
Should I for a moment rest,
Down in yonder grassy dell ;
Little doth she dream that I
From her soft caresses fly,
But to breathe the sweet perfume
Of the pale Magnolia bloom ;
Or to spend a listless hour
In the cool, secluded bower
Of the pining Passion-flower !
Blither wooer, who than I ?
Quoth the gaudy Butterfly.

III.

When the shades of evening fall
Like the foldings of a pall—
When the dew is on the flowers

And the mute unconscious Hours
Still pursue their noiseless flight
Through the dreamy realms of night,
In the shut or open rose
Ah! how sweetly I repose!
Zephyrs, freighted with perfume,
Gently rock my cradle-bloom,
Myriads of fire-flies
From the dewy leaves arise,
And Diana's starry train,
Sweetly scintillant again,
Never sleep while I repose
On the petals of the rose,
Sweeter couch hath who than I?
Quoth the brilliant Butterfly

IV.

Life is but a summer day
Gliding languidly away:
Winter comes alas! too soon:
Would it were forever June!
Yet through brief my flight may be,

Fun and frolic still for me!
When the summer leaves and flowers,
Now so beautiful and gay,
In the cold autumnal showers,
Droop and fade and pine away,
Who would not prefer to die?—
What were life to *such as I*?
Quoth the flaunting Butterfly.

THE STAR ABOVE THE MANGER.

One night, while lowly shepherd swains
 Their fleecy charge attended,
A light burst o'er Judea's plains,
 Unutterably splendid.

Far in the dusky orient,
 A star, unknown in story,
Arose to flood the firmament,
 With more than morning glory.

The clustering constellations, erst
 So gloriously gleaming,
Waned, when its sudden splendor burst
 Upon their paler beaming.

And Heaven drew nearer Earth that night—

Flung wide its pearly portals—

Sent forth from all its realms of light

Its radiant immortals :

They hovered in the golden air,

Their golden censers swinging,

And woke the drowsy shepherds there

With their seraphic singing.

Yet Earth on this—her gala night

No jubilee was keeping ;

She lay, unconscious of the light,

In silent beauty sleeping.

No more shall brightest cherubim

And stateliest archangels

Symphonious sing *such* choral hymn—

Proclaim *so* sweet evangels :

No more appear that star at eve,
Though glimpses of its glory
Are seen by those who still believe
The shepherd's simple story :

In Faith's clear firmament afar—
To Unbelief a stranger—
Forever glows the golden star
That stood above the manger.

Age after age may roll away,
But on Time's rapid river,
The light of its celestial ray
Shall never cease to quiver.

Frail barges on the swelling tide
Are drifting with the ages.—
The skies grow dark—around each bark
A howling tempest rages !

Pale with affright, lost helmsmen steer,
 While creaking timbers shiver—
 The breakers roar—Grim Death is near—
 Oh ! who may now deliver !

Light—light from the Heraldic Star
 Breaks brightly o'er the billow ;
 The storm, rebuked, is fled afar,
 The pilgrim seeks his pillow.

* * * * * * *

Lost—lost indeed, his heart must be—
 His way *how* dark with danger,
 Whose hooded eye may never see
 The Star above the manger !

ANTIPODES.

On those dismal Polar plains,
Where relentless winter reigns—
Where, amid eternal snow,
Dwell the squalid Esquimaux ;
When Morning awakes
And laughingly shakes
The light from her luminous hair ;
How bright are the beams,
Which scatter the dreams
Of the shivering slumberers there !

When the sleepers arise,
How sweet the surprise
Of radiant skies,
Whence Aurora exiles,

With her scintillant smiles,
The gloom of an Arctic night!
Yet oh ! there are times,
In the sunniest climes,
When shadow is sweeter than light !
When weary of day
And sick of its shine
We languish and pine
For its passing away !

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

Hidden no longer,
In moss-covered ledges,
Starring the wayside
Under the hedges,
Violets, pimpernels,
Flashing with dew,
Daisies and asphodels
Burst into view.

Down in the bosky dells
Everywhere,
Faintly their fairy bells
Chime in the air.
Thanks to the sunshine !

Thanks to the showers !
They come again,—come again
Beautiful flowers !

Twittering sparrows flit
Merrily by ;
Skylarks triumphantly
Warble on high :
ECHO, who slumbers
So long in the glen,
Awakens to mimic
The song of the wren :
For thanks to the sunbeams !
Thanks to the showers !
They bud again—bloom again—
Beautiful flowers !

The mocking bird too—
The sweetest of mimes—
Is prodigal now
Of his jubilant rhymes !
And my heart is so light—

So cheery to-day,
I fancy I hear,
In his rapturous lay,
The music I heard
In those halcyon hours,
When LOVE to my heart
(Like SPRING to her bowers,)
First came to awaken
HOPE's beautiful flowers !

ODE TO SLEEP.

I

Come gentle Sleep ! and hither bring to me,
The beetle's drone—the buzzing of the bee,—
All slumbrous sounds which Silence loves to
hear—

Which steal like balm into the drowsy ear;
Let summer-rain fall softly from the eaves
While fragrant zephyrs whisper through the
leaves:

II

To every care some sweet nepenthe bring—
Benumb each sense—bid Sorrow cease to sting;—

From dreamless rest let *him* awake no more
Who only lives, existence to deplore;
Haste! Siren, haste! low lullabies to sing
Until I die beneath the shadow of thy wing.

III

Haste, soothing Sleep! Bring with thee noiseless
Night,
For I would now no more behold the light :
Since dawn of day comes only to betray
Hope's brightest blossoms withering away—
Unveils, before unsympathizing eyes,
A heart whose woe no masking may disguise,
Cimmerian Gloom—Egyptian Shadow now
Chase the accurséd sunlight from my brow!

DARKNESS.

As when with eager straining eyes,
We gaze on gloomy twilight skies
Until we falsely dream that we,
For one brief instant, dimly see
The smile of some capricious star
Flash through the murky clouds afar ;
So my bewildered heart, to-night,
Gropes blindly, seeking hidden light :
Its mournful introverted eye,
Now fixed upon a darker sky,
Would fain explore the mirksome maze,
Dispel the twilight's misty haze,
And call to its enraptured gaze
From out their petulant eclipse,
The smiles that shone on Laura's lips.

BANISHED ROME.

"Tell him you saw Caius Marius sitting, an exile, amidst the ruins of Carthage."

HISTORY OF ROME.

When earthly hopes have flown away—

When skies are dark and drear,

Why should the weary spirit stay

Repining here ?

Why, like yon Roman, linger where

The wreck of pomp and power ;—

The crumbling column, reared in air,—

The fallen fane—the time-worn tower

Tell of a brighter hour ?

The laurel from his haughty brow

Has fallen long ago ;

Why seeks the hapless exile now

Memorials of wo ?

Is there a luxury in grief—

And *do* the wretched find relief,
In feeling that their lost estate
Is *shared* however desolate ?

It must be so ! A type thou art

Oh Carthage in decay !
Of many a noble *Roman* heart
Whose hopes are swept away !
Low in the dust of desolation laid,
Well may *the fallen* seek thy friendly
shade—

The exile find, a sister now in thee

Who art no longer *Empress of the Sea !*

TAKING A SNOOZE.

"While I nodded, nearly napping."

THE RAVEN.

The drowsy hum of the murmuring bees,
Hovering over the lavender trees,
Steals through half-shut lattices ;
As awake or asleep—I scarce know which—
I lazily loll near a window-niche,
Whose gossamer curtains are softly stirred
By the gauzy wings of a humming-bird.

From airy heights, the feathery down,
Blown from the nettle's nodding crown,
Weary with wandering everywhere,
Sails slowly to earth through the sultry air;

While indolent zephyrs, "oppressed with
perfume,"

Stolen from many a balmy bloom,
Are falling asleep within the room.

Now floating afar—now hovering near
Dull to the eye and dumb to the ear,
Grow the shapes that I see—the sounds that
I hear ;

Every murmur around dies into my dream
Save only the song of a sylvan stream,
Whose burthen, set to a somnolent tune,
Has lulled the whispering leaves of June.

All things are hazy, and dreamy, and dim,
The flies in lazier circles swim ;
On slumbrous wings—on muffled feet
Imaginary sounds retreat ;
And the clouds—Elysian isles that lie
In the bright blue sea of summer sky—
Fade out, before my closing eye.

INDIAN SUMMER.

(*A Fragment.*)

These are mild delicious days;
Gleaming through the golden haze,
Which around the landscape plays,
Every object now assumes
Mellow lights, or dreamy glooms :--
Things once distant now are near;
Fainter seem the sounds we hear;
Feebler now is Zephyr's sigh,
And yet lower the reply
Of the rills that murmur by.

* * * * *

High upon his airy throne,
(Girdled with a misty zone)
Rides the pallid sun at noon,
Seeming but a brighter moon;
Lazily his tempered rays
Measure these enchanting days.

HOPE.

I.

Bright hopes blossom day by day—

Blossom but to leave us;

Those that linger longest stay

That they may

Still more heartlessly deceive us :

Yet in sorrows darkest hour,

They have power

Light and rapture to impart ;

As the sunbeam to the shower,

HOPE ! thou art !

When thou shinest rainbows start

From the gloomy clouds which lower

Over my desponding heart !

II.

HOPE ! those ruby lips of thine,

(So beguiling !)

Mingle April shade and shine

In their smiling :

Why relievest thou my pain,

But to fly away again,—

Leaving me alone to mope,

A repining misanthrope ?

Teasing—Tantalizing Fay !

Stay !—Oh ! Stay !

III.

Thou art here anon,—and then,

Pipest in some lonely glen :—

Now thou hauntest dark morasses,

Swathed in dank and dewy grasses,

Far from the abodes of men :

There, thy fairy lamp is lighted—

Thither, its illusive ray

Leads the credulous, benighted,

Way-worn wanderer astray ;

And when he has lost his way,
(Sink or swim)
In the dark thou leavest him !

IV.

Incarnation of the Graces !
Let me hear once more the sweet
Falling of thy fairy feet !—
Come, and scatter bright oases
In this gloomiest of places !—
Hither from thy far retreat,
Haste to cheat me ! *Thy deceit*
I have never chidden yet;
'Tis the cruel *undecieving*,
 I regret:—
There can never—never be
In my heart a shade of grieving,
 Save when thou
 Art, as now,
On the eve of leaving me !

V.

Witching Fairy!—Airy Sprite!

Must I bid thee, now, “good night?”

And shall my sad heart in vain,

Pine for thee to call again?

Promise! that at dawn of day

I shall see thy plumage gay!

Then, sweet “Phantom of Delight!

Thou mayst wing thy wanton flight,

Bidding me “Good Night!” “Good
Night!”

If that night—GOOD night can be

When I bid adieu to thee!

LOVE.

Love is a lamp unseen
Burning to waste, or, if its light is found,
Nursed for an idle hour, then idly broken."

PARRHASIUS.—N. P. WILLIS

Not so ! Not so ! Love's lamp is not unseen ;
It never burns to waste,—is never quenched :—
His is a vestal lamp, whose virgin flame
Illumes the dark with pure and steady glow ;
And should its feeblest scintillation fall,
It would not lie *unheeded* where it fell,—
It might not perish there or elsewhere,
For Love, coëval with the throne of God,
Is coëxistent with ETERNAL LIFE !

He moves on earth—a page in BEAUTY'S train ;
He follows her—a rapt idolater—

Gloats on her glances—feeds upon her smiles—
Lights, *with his lamp*, her pathway through the
dark,

And keeps a lonely vigil while she sleeps:
He only knows her worth, and spies in her
A thousand graces others may not see:
BEAUTY would *live for him*—HE *die for her*;
They cannot dwell apart—they came from Heaven
Heirs of immortal life—and when at length
She vanishes from earth, He flies with her;—
They seek *together*, undiscovered lands—
They float like Summer-birds, on halcyon plumes,
To blend the myrtle with the orange-flower—
To build, in brighter climes, their bridal bower.

JOY.

"The laughing Hours before her feet,
Are scattering spring-time roses."

PAUL H. HAYNE.

With light upon her rosy lip .
And laughter in her eye,
Whence came the maiden ?—Did she slip,
With sunbeams, from the sky ?—
Steal from the gate of Paradise,
When no one else was by ?
How merrily she seems to skip !
What mirthful songs arise,
As bounding, like an antelope,
Who (full of fear, as she of hope)
The baffled hunter flies ;
She leaveth me, alone, to mope—
A melancholy misanthrope !

VIOLETS.

(*From "Viola," an unpublished Poem.*)

A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye,
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.—WORDSWORTH.

Oh! where on earth may Beauty hide?—

In unobtrusive grace abide

Unnoticed and unknown?—

To what far distant spot retire,

Where none may love—where few admire,

To live and die alone?

Although no sparkling coronet

Upon her beaming brow is set

She sways a regal scepter yet,

While Innocence, wherever met—

In garb however lowly,

Will still, unconsciously, proclaim

Her lofty mission and her name,—

Sing of the clime from whence she came
And tell us she is holy :—
Spirits, communing with the skies,
Have heavenly glances in their eyes !

* * * * *

In unfrequented places,
Where sunbeams cannot peep—
Where Echo's faintest echo
Is lying fast asleep—
These timid woodland graces
From dewy leaves arise—
Unveil their blushing faces—
Uplift their beaming eyes,
Less fearful in seclusion,
Of impudent intrusion
Or surprise ;
Yet each of these recluses,
While budding into bloom,
Unconsciously diffuses
Sweet perfume ;
And, ere they seem aware,

The censers which they bear
Reveal unto the air
 Where they dwell ;
And the breezes as they blow
 To and fro,
In sweetest odor tell
Of dingle and and of dell
As yet unshone upon
 By the sun :—
They guide on eager feet,
To the shadowy retreat
 Of the Nun,
All who love to stand
Awhile on *holy* land ;
Who feel assured again,
So long as *these* remain,[†]
That Innocence, on earth,
Yet loiters, loth to fly
To purer realms on high—
Vaunts not her heavenly birth,
Nor publishes her worth
 To gaze of mortal eye,

But waits to drop in death
The masque—the dark disguise,
When with her parting breath
A radiant seraph flies.

Alas ! how often we
Externals only see—
How often we despise,
Or look with listless eyes
On those in humble guise,
Nor know, until they disappear
That guardian angels lingered near?

WOODED, WON, FORSAKEN.
(*"From Viola."*)

"And where the Spring-time sun had longest shone,
The violet looked up and found itself alone."

THOS. BUCHANAN READ.

Thou art languishing and pining
Blue-eyed One !
Thou art drooping and declining,
And thou faintest for the shining
Of the sun ;
For the sunbeam come to sue thee—
To worship thee, and woo thee,
But to ruin and undo thee
Lovely Bloom !
He smiled but to deceive thee—
To blight thee and bereave thee
Of perfume,—
Then heartlessly to leave thee
To thy doom !

Thou hopest in thy sorrow,
He will come again to-morrow,
Nor depart,
(His long delay forgiven)
To his bright abode in heaven,
Until his smile has driven
From thy heart,
The weight which now oppresses,
And the grief which now distresses
While he murmurs, as he blesses
Thee with ravishing caresses,
“How beautiful thou art!”
But alas! thy hopes are failing,
Thy prayers are unavailing,
For wintry winds are wailing
As they fly;
Thou shalt sleep without awaking—
Thy heart no longer aching—
When morning beams are breaking
On the sky!

REVEILLE.

Awake ! Arise ! no longer be
A laggard in the race !
O thou who wouldst thy fellow free,
Burst first the chains which shackle thee—
Insignia of disgrace !

Arise ! and muster all thy might !
Stand foremost in the van !
He who unfurls the flag of *Right*,
Must march *a hero* in the fight—
Must be himself a *man* !

To Arms ! Let sluggards idly stand—
Let cravens skulk and cower !
'Tis thine to wield a battle-brand,
Whose touch will nerve thy failing hand
With supra-mortal power !

In vain may stalwart foes assail,
The champion of Right;
For panoplied in triple mail
The true of heart can never fail—
Are never put to flight!

THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK.

“The Shadow of a Great Rock in a weary land.”—Isalah xxxii : 2.

Lost in Sahara's trackless wilds, in vain
Wouldst thou shake off the darkness of despair,
Thou reelest blindly in the noontide glare
Athirst and weary o'er the burning plain:
Long hast thou trod beneath thy bleeding feet
The glowing sand, a fearful death to die,
While sparkling fountains burst upon thine eye
And grouping pa'm trees spread a shelter from
the heat.

Far—far away, beside a gloomy hearth,
Where feebly now the fading embers burn,
Thy hoary sire, and she who gave thee birth
Heart-broken wait to welcome thy return;—
God shield thee! hapless straggler from the
flock

And hide thee now within *the shadow of the rock!*

STELLA.

"Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!"

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

Star of my soul ! I saw thee rise
In trembling beauty o'er a sea :—
A silent sea—*the past* that lies
Asleep in memory.

My spirit caught the hallowed beams
That fell on the enchanted air ;
An unseen seraph in my dreams
Sealed thy bright image there.

Around me fell a golden glow
That flushed the amaranthine flowers,
Whose censers, swinging to and fro,
Perfumed the midnight hours :

For HOPE, who long on wanton wing,
Coquetted coyly with DESIRE,
Now deigned to robe the meanest thing
In beautiful attire.

She nestled in my happy heart :—
She whispered in my rosy dream,
That she would never more depart—
Thou shouldst forever beam.

But now, alas! the scowling sky
Is scarred by livid—lurid levin;
I dare not look again on high
To miss my star from heaven!

Star of my soul! Unchanging Star!—
Fair wanderer through 'realms of light!
Although thy beams are shed afar,
On *other* lands to-night,—

Although the glorious golden dreams
That made *my past* a "Holy Land,"
(Where fountains sang whose crystal streams
Purled over silver sand,)

Long since have flown; my soul returns—
A pilgrim, to a shattered shrine,
Whose vestal light still sadly burns
In memory of thine.

Bright star, arise, I pine for thee!
Flash through the angry clouds afar!
Earth has no other light for me—
My sky no other star!

Beam! softly beam! Dispel my gloom!
Drive fear and shadow far away!
Bid hyacinthine hopes to bloom
And Spring forever stay!

DULCAMARA.

Oft when the sunlight's golden gleam
Has died upon our sorrow ;
We sink in sleep,—perchance to dream
Of happiness to-morrow.

We fain would banish thoughts of ill,
Or smile at their intrusion ;
And oft deluded, madly still
Cling to each sweet illusion.

Dawn brings no day, and Spring no bloom ;
Earth seems a sad Sahara ;
'Till Hope returning, gilds the gloom
And leads to—wells of Marah !

Yet, is it not far better thus,
To be forever cheated ?—
How dark would be the world to us
Were not the cheat repeated.

What though our castles, reared in air.
Begin, so soon, to crumble ;
Hope is a refuge from despair
When all their turrets tumble !

But wo to those who wake to weep
The visions they have cherished,
And may not find again in sleep
The phantoms which have perished !

One such I know, within whose heart
Hope has no more a dwelling ;—
From whose dark dreams, no whispers start
Of peace and joy foretelling !

THE LIGHT OF THE LATTICE.

A FRAGMENT.

She little dreams that I to-night
Peer out, through the mist and the rain,
To catch one glimmering gleam of light
From a far-off window-pane;
But the light that shines
Through the jessamine vines,
Which around *her* casement creep;
Dispels with its beams,
The sweetest of dreams
And awakens me out of my sleep!

MY HOPES LIKE WANING WATCH-FIRES GLOW.

I.

My hopes like waning watch-fires glow,
Whose lurid flames, though burning low,
Still flicker wildly, to and fro ;—
They brightly gleam,—again retire ;—
Revive, and sparkle to expire,
Yet loth forever to depart
They to the ghastly embers start,
And die to leave a darker shade
Where erst their flitful flashes played

II.

My hopes are like the hopes that fail
The seaman shipwrecked in the gale—
Unheeded by the passing sail :
As fades the sunlight from the clouds,

The smiles that hailed her snowy shrouds*
Die on *our* lips :—*His* drifting spar,
By raging billows borne afar,
Perchance may safely reach the shore,
But *mine*—is tossed forevermore.

III.¹

My hopes are songs, a siren sung,
And flowers her fairy fingers flung
Upon a rock, to which they clung;
They bloomed awhile in beauty there,
Then perished in its Alpine air,
And *now* that rock is bare and bleak;
The lichen shuns its haggard peak,
And he who haunts the lonely shore
Shall hear the siren sing no more !

*The author is fully aware that "shrouds" are not "snowy." But, aside from poetic license, the same figure of speech which substitutes "sail" for "vessel," will sanction, he opines, the use of "shrouds" in lieu of "sails," to which the epithet used would be more appropriate.

TEAR DOWN THAT FLAG!

Tear down the flag of constellated stars!

Blot out its field of blue!

And suffer only "the red planet Mars"*

To shed its ghastly hue—

Let only now his beams of baleful light

Burst like a beacon on the gloom of night!

Trail in the dust the Tyrant's standard sheet!

'Twas erst the flag of Tyrant's fiercest foes;

It now shall be the symbol of defeat—

Shall droop prophetic of impending woes

To those who stand where hero-martyrs stood,

And Cain-like, clamor for their brother's blood!

* The first watch of the night is given

To the red planet Mars.—LONGFELLOW.

Tear down that flag ! Its skies to sable turn ;
Fast fades each "stripe of pure celestial white,"
Its bickering stars to sparkless embers burn,
Its Eagle skulks the light !
A vulture now, he wings his sluggish flight
To nestle with the noisome birds of night !

Tear down that flag ! It flouts the breeze,
A flagrant—flaunting insult to the sky ;
Disgraced at home—dishonored on the seas,
Its coward colors fly,
From field to field ingloriously driven,
With *stars* eclipsed and *stripes* all rudely riven !

EARLIER POEMS.

FLOWERS FOR MARY.

Though thou beloved, mayst never know—
Mayst never carelessly bestow
One idle look upon the giver ;
Within whose soul each glance of thine,
 (A ray of light almost divine)
Shall in celestial beauty shine,
Forever and forever,
Like stars reflected on the breast
Of a serene, unruffled tarn,
That slumbers on the cloudy crest
Of a majestic mountain cairn ;
Yet I have brought from forest glade

From crystal fount and sylvan shade,
 (Where I secreted oft have seen
 The flower-laden fairy)
A coronet of living green
For thee, bewitching Mary!
Spurn not the sacrifice I bring,
Love's frail though fragrant offering,—
These fading flowers, that droop and die,
Pale exiles from their native sky!
Some hues of Eden still they wear,
 Born of auroral light,
Ere sin, and sorrow, and despair
On raven wings had entered there,
 To wither and to blight.

Fain would I linger here and twine,
 While steal away the starlit hours,
A wreath of snow-white jessamine,
 And crown thee Queen of Flowers;
But I may now no longer rest
 Beneath thy lattice love!
Pale Dian hides her diamond crest

And seeks the shady grove ;
Her train into a cloud withdrawn
Are waiting for the coming dawn ;
I can no longer stay :
In yonder copse methought I heard
The note of an awakened bird ;
'Tis near the dawn of day ;
The morning star grows wan and pale,
And Night forsakes the misty vale,
I too must haste away !
Farewell ! a lingering farewell
My Life—My Love, to thee !
This fading wreath alone may tell
How strange—how potent is the spell
One sunny smile of thine has thrown
Around the heart of *your unknown*
Enraptured devotee !

PERDITE!

Farewell, forever to the dreams
 (Alluring dreams!) whose fitful light,
Revealed a land where sorrows's night
 Can never veil the golden beams
Of life, and hope, and love!

FAREWELL TO HEAVEN! Why linger now
 In wild regret before THE CROSS?
'Tis powerless: ETERNAL LOSS
 Corrodes my heart;—seals on my brow,
The blackness of despair.

What care I now how long the fire
 Of life within my bosom burns,
Since JESUS now no more returns;
 But bids each lingering hope expire
And veils his lovely face?

Ah ! what to me is wealth or fame ?
A sunbeam glimmering on a pall ;
From some high pinnacle to fall ;
To leave on earth an envied name,
And then—to pass away.

Farewell ! Farewell ! I *may* not stay
Where hope's last "rare and radiant"
flower
To ashes fell :—in that sad hour
The golden sunlight fled away
And left ETERNAL SHADE !

THE SUNBEAM.

Thing of beauty ! brightly gleaming,
Softly through my lattice streaming,
To my spirit thou dost seem
Like a sweet thought in a dream ;
Linger yet a little while,
Still my loneliness beguile !

Brilliant Sunbeam ! thou dost bring
On thy gleaming—golden wing,
Life and gladness, light and love,
From the firmament above ;
Thou dost change the morning mist
Into sparkling amethyst !

Messenger from realms of light!
Thou art beautiful and bright;
How resplendent then is *He*,
Sunbeam, who created thee;—
Called thee from chaotic night,—
Bade thee sparkle in his sight?

Shining harbinger of Spring!
All the earth is blossoming,
At the earliest “peep of dawn,”
In the woodland—on the lawn
Songs of welcome may be heard—
Matins of the mocking-bird.

Welcome! bright, celestial ray!
Where thou dwellest it is day;
When thou wanderest afar—
When I hail the Evening Star,
Then sweet sunbeam! I shall see
But a burning type of thee!

HORÆ HALCYONÆ.

"O, Death in Life, the days that are no more."

TENNYSON.

Ye hours that minutes seemed,
As minutes seem in heaven !
(Should this impiety be deemed
 I pray to be forgiven ;
Because—it is my only plea—
I spent those halcyon hours,
With *her* who was, and *is* to me,
What to the butterfly and bee,
Were Hybla's sweetest flowers.)
Oh ! happy—happy time :
To what celestial clime ?—
Through what enchanted realms of dreams
Where all that is and all that seems,
 Is beautiful and bright ;

Doth Fancy—the bewitching sprite—
 Lead Memory astray?
Why am I *here* alas! to-night,
And that sweet land of love and light,
 So far away?

* * * * *

Sweet sunbeams of a summer frown!
 Which nothing might eclipse
Save the seraphic smiles which shone
 Upon her ruby lips;
Say! is the past, *forever* past?
 Why have ye fled afar?
Your flight hath ushered in at last
 A night without a star:

Stars are invisible by day—
The moon hath no diurnal ray:
 And *hence* bright children of the sun:
Your beauty *then* I heeded not,
For lesser lights—it is their lot—
Are all unnoticed—all forgot,

When burns a *brighter* one!
But now since her averted eyes,
Lend summer-light to other skies—
Leave wintry gloom to these ;
Bright sunbeams ! ye at length arise
From out those treacherous seas ;
Whence wild regret, evoketh yet
 Tormenting memories ;
For their bright billows evermore,
Caress the flower-enamelled shore,
 Where Hope's frail barque at anchor lay ;
And whence beneath a summer-sky,
It sailed a shattered hulk to lie
 On breakers far away :
But could I now awhile forget
 The dreams of other days ;
Or never—never more regret,
 Far—far diviner rays—
Cease *one* bright spirit to adore—
Cease *her* sweet presence to implore,
Then might your loveliness impart,
Light, hope and rapture to my heart.

Ye hours that minutes seemed,
As minutes seem in heaven !
Whose light to me is that which beamed
On man from Eden driven !
Haste ! hither haste !—dispel my gloom—
Once more the lamp of hope illum—
Bid blighted flowers again to bloom
And whisper “ All’s forgiven ” !

LIFE AND DEATH.

Life is the tossing here awhile
On a tumultuous sea ;
With, now and then, a sunlight smile,
Or glimpse of an enchanted isle,
Far in futurity.

Death is the closing of the day,
The lulling of the wind ;—
The twilight shades in sad array
Bearing the setting sun away,
And leaving night behind.

Life is the never ending day—
The never setting sun ;
The passing of each cloud away,—
One blooming, bright, eternal May,
Where Love and Hope are one.

Aye ! Death like Night bids Morning rise
Beyond the misty sea,
The sun to burn in brighter skies—
The soul to dwell in Paradise
Through all Eternity !

THE COMBATANTS.

There light and shadow meet
And mingle, and retreat ;
Beautiful Hope, and wan Despair,
Wage a fearful conflict there
For an empty throne :
There is no Night, there is no Day—
Nor have they, alternate sway ;
One must reign alone,
But neither of the twain
Weareth yet
The coronet,
Or rules the proud domain.

* * * * *

Faith and Mercy—Truth and Hope
With the “ powers of Darkness ” cope,
All the pure and all the bright
From the radiant “ realms of light,”

Serried, stand upon "the right ;"
On "the left" in grim array
See ! the bannered host of Hell
Rushing to the dread affray
Marshallled by the Fiend who fell ;—
By that *Gloom*, a *Glory* erst,
Who by foul ambition first
Lost his high estate and fell :—
Him—the Outlawed—the Accursed ;
Who dareth still,—
And ever will—
Vainly—madly to rebel.

O'er the legions of the Lost,
By each wave of battle tossed,
The red oriflamme of Hell,
Rose—alternate, rose and fell :
Hither—thither wildly driven
With the ebb and flow of tide,
Streamed the holy flag of Heaven—
Emblem of *the Crucified* !
Brighter than the Morning Star,
Beamed that sacred sign afar,—

On the scowling front of war !

* * * * *

Half light—half cloud the sky that stood

Above that fearful field of blood ;

Forth from the cloud flashed the red levin ;

Stars gemmed the other half of heaven ;

And where their beams the shadows met,

As though some pallid sun had set,

A livid—lurid—ghastly glare

Or lit, or gloomed the upper air !

But hark ! a wild despairing yell

Of baffled rage—of deadly fear

Bursts from the frantic fiends of Hell

Upon the universal ear !

Their crested leader calls in vain

His clansmen to the charge again ;

Death, Destruction, Pain and Wo,

Struggling—battling to and fro,

Madly urge their ruined ranks

To form once more the proud phalanx ;

Now blindly rush the reeking studs,

Again like tempest-shaken reeds

Those stalwart riders reel and rock
Tumultuous in the battle shock !

* * * * *

The Cross more brightly gleams on high ;

They fail !—they fly !—the Demons fly !

Like lightning-riven

Storm-clouds driven

Athwart a midnight sky !

They fly !—they fly !—they fly !

Like the shifting sand of the desert-plain,

Or the feathery foam of the angry main,

When uplifted—

Winnowed—sifted—

Swept in frantic fury on,

By those harvesters of Doom—

Those dread reapers for the tomb,—

Tempestuous Euroclydon !

Pestiferous Simoom !

* * * * *

The Holy Babe of Bethlehem—

The Lamb of God—the Crucified—

The Bridegroom of the ready Bride

Hath won and wears the diadem !



